

REMARKS

Claims 1-29 were filed with the original application. Claims 1-10 and 16 are allowed, and claims 11-15, 17-19, 21-23 and 27-29 are rejected. Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that claims 20 and 24-26 are allowable after amendment to incorporate limitations of base and intervening claims.

Claims 11-15, 17-19, 21-23 and 27-29 are hereby canceled, and claims 20, 24 and 25 are hereby amended, without prejudice, to expedite allowance of the application. Upon entry of this Amendment, claims 1-10, 16, 20 and 24-26 will be pending. Applicant submits that no new matter is introduced by the amendments, and that the application is now in condition for allowance.

Priority

Benefit to Prior Filed International Application No. PCT/US02/06336

Applicant hereby amends the first sentence of the Specification to include a proper reference under 35 U.S.C. § 120 to International Application No. PCT/US02/06336. Applicant also submits herewith an initial Application Data Sheet, to correct the reference to Application No. PCT/US02/06336 in the Declaration, submitted on March 22, 2004, which erroneously claimed foreign priority benefits under 35 U.S.C. § 119 to Application No. PCT/US02/06336.

As suggested by the Examiner, Applicant submits herewith a Petition under 37 CFR § 1.78(a)(3) for acceptance of an unintentionally delayed claim for benefit, under 35 U.S.C. § 120, to prior filed International Application No. PCT/US02/06336, which designated the United States and was filed on March 1, 2002.

Benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/273,093

Applicant respectfully notes that Application No. PCT/US02/06336, which designated the U.S., is entitled under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) to the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/273,093. The first sentence of Application No. PCT/US02/06336, as originally filed, properly claims priority to the Provisional Application (see, e.g., MPEP § 201.11(III)(B).) Moreover, the priority claim to the Provisional Application was properly submitted and acknowledged in Application No. PCT/US02/06336.

For the above-described reasons, if the above-mentioned Petition is granted, Applicant respectfully requests acknowledgement of the priority relationship under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) between Application No. PCT/US02/06336 and Provisional Application No. 60/273,093.

Amendments

To the Specification

The first sentence of the Specification is amended to properly refer to PCT Application No. PCT/US02/06336, i.e., the present application is a continuation of PCT Application No. PCT/US02/06336, which designated the U.S. As described above, Applicant submits herewith a Petition for the delayed claim for benefit as a continuation application.

To the Claims

Claims 11-15, 17-19, 21-23 and 27-29 are canceled. Claims 20, 24 and 25 are amended to incorporate the limitations of their base claim, i.e., independent claim 17.

Accordingly, Applicants submit no new matter is introduced by the above amendments.

Information Disclosure Statement

Applicant submits herewith an Information Disclosure Statement, under 37 CFR § 1.97(c), associated with references cited in a Japanese counterpart of the present application. Applicant respectfully requests consideration of the listed references.

Rejection of Claims 11-15, 17-19, 21-23 and 27-29 Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 11-15, 17-19, 21-23 and 27-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,444,807 to Liu in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,345,837 to Kallet. Claims 11-15, 17-19, 21-23 and 27-29 are hereby canceled.

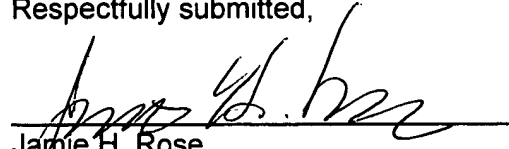
Objection to Claims 20 and 24-26

Claims 20 and 24-26 are objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim. Claims 20, 24 and 25 are amended to incorporate the limitations of their base claim, i.e., independent claim 17. Claim 26 depends from claim 25. Accordingly, Applicants request reconsideration of the objection to claims 20 and 24-26.

CONCLUSION

In view of the amendments presented herein, Applicant believes the application is now in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned, if the Examiner believes that a telephone conversation could be helpful in expediting prosecution of the instant application.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jamie H. Rose", is written over a horizontal line.

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